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*National Humiliation and Repentance recommended, and the Causes
of the present Rebellion in America assigned, in*

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S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13. 1766.

Being the DAY appointed by PROCLAMATION
FOR A GENERAL FAST.

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PSAL. vii. 9. former Part.

Oh, let the wickedness of the Wicked come to an end; but establish the Just.

THIS Psalm is generally ascribed to David as its Author; but on what particular occasion it was composed, or to what transaction it refers, is not easy, nor is it needful, to determine. The whole Life of this eminent person was a scene of severe trials and uncommon dangers. While a Subject, he was harassed with frequent Persecutions; when a Sovereign, with repeated Rebellions. But his Heart was not daunted or dismayed at the most alarming appearances. In All his difficulties he relied, for safety and protection, on that Goodness, which gradually advanced him from the Sheepfolds, to the Throne of Israel; and in Many of them, he expressed the pious emotions of his soul in those inimitable Hymns, which are graciously preserved for the use of the Church, to assist Our devotion in similar cases.

The Psalm now before us seems to have been composed, under a keen sense of the injuries he had received, or of the dangers that encompassed him, through the implacable enmity of Saul, or Shimei, or some of their Confederates. It contains an Appeal to the great Searcher of Hearts, for his own innocence and integrity; a Prayer, that the wicked and malicious purposes of his Enemies might be defeated; and expressions of strong confidence in the Divine Goodness, to aid him in all his difficulties, and to support him under all his afflictions.

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The words of my Text undoubtedly had reference to some particular case: but as the Terms are general, they may serve to express the wishes and prayers of good men, with regard to Wickedness in general, be the instances of it private or public, more confined or more extended. They are accordingly applicable to the Design of this Day's Solemnity; which is—at the Call of a most gracious Sovereign, who is ever anxiously attentive to the welfare of his Kingdoms, and the happiness of his Subjects,—to humble ourselves before our Almighty Creator—to confess and bewail our own unworthiness—to implore the pardon and forgiveness of our manifold offences—to deprecate those heavy Judgments, which our innumerable Provocations have most justly deserved,—and then, further, to beseech Him, by the intervention and assistance of his good Providence, to put a speedy end to that enormous wickedness,—to that wanton and barbarous *Rebellion*, which, at this time, is deeply distressing to Millions of our Fellow-subjects, and of highly detrimental consequence to the whole British Empire.

The Propriety and Wisdom, as well as the Piety, of this measure, in the present situation of our public affairs, can hardly be disputed by any who profess and call themselves *Christians*. It is founded on Principles that are common both to natural and revealed Religion. The Principles here meant are such as the following: That He, who created the World by his Power, governs it by his Providence: that his Government of the world includes in it the direction of All events, and especially of those which more immediately concern the general interests of Kingdoms and Nations: That, without his Concurrence, and unattended by his Blessing, effects are not answerable to the appearance of the powers that are to produce them; “the race being not *secure* to the “swift, nor the battle to the strong:” and, That his Blessing is to be expected, and can properly be requested, only in the way of Obedience and Duty.

In Consequence of these Principles every wise Nation (to say nothing of Individuals) will see the Propriety, in all cases of danger and embarrassment, of interesting in its favour that Superintending and Controlling Power, to which all
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the Kingdoms of the Earth are subject ; and which conducts, or suspends, or reverses at its pleasure, the natural effects of second and subordinate Causes ; and to that End, will perceive the necessity of fulfilling those Conditions, on which alone all reasonable hopes of obtaining such assistance are founded.

Where the Character of a Community is properly virtuous and religious, the Nature of Things, and the Promises of God, are its Security : they are such Anchors as may safely be trusted, amid the greatest Storms and Tempests that can beat upon a State. While " Righteousness exalteth a Nation,"—and strengthens, and renders it respectable, by its natural operation ; it secures these great ends more effectually, by engaging the Favour of Divine Providence. God has declared, That " them that honour Him He will honour,"—whilst " they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed."

But the great Question is, How is the blessing of heaven to be obtained by a Sinful Nation, suffering under any Public calamity?—Neither Reason nor Revelation can point out any other Means to this End, but that of Changing its character ; by " putting away the evil of its doings,"—by " ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well ;" or, in other words, by a general Repentance, Reformation, and Amendment.

Now, the proper way for a People to enter upon a Reformation, is by a public and solemn act of Humiliation and Abasement ; such as we are called upon to perform This Day ; in which all Orders of men, from the highest to the lowest, prostrate themselves before the throne of Grace,—humbly confessing, bewailing, disclaiming and renouncing their past Offences, and forming resolutions of future Obedience.

Although this in itself be not a Reformation, yet it is a proper Beginning ; and, when performed in Sincerity, uninfluenced by the too common motives of Hypocrisy or Ostentation, is such an act of homage paid to the great Governor of the Universe, as He often rewards with a signal Blessing.

It was by a public act of Humiliation, that the infamous and abandoned Ahab, whose Story disgraces even the Is-

raelitish Annals, averted the stroke of Divine Justice, that was intended for his destruction. It was by a solemn humiliation of this kind, that the destruction of Nineveh was suspended; although the purposes of Heaven to destroy it within a few days, had been formally declared, under a special commission by an inspired Prophet. The tremendous prediction operated aright—“and the people of Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a *Fast*, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.” This was the only expedient that could be suggested, for bringing them within a Possibility of escaping.

The King, who exercised his authority on the occasion, was a stranger to the general declarations of Divine Revelation; but, from the commonly received notions concerning the measures of Providence, he was led to form some faint Hopes that God, in *such* a case, would be merciful. “Who can tell (says he) if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” As the Humiliation was great, and the Repentance sincere, his Hopes were not disappointed: for the narrative proceeds—“And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had *said* that he would do unto them, and he did it not.”

On the former of these cases it may be observed, that the fasting and prayers of a notorious Profligate, who had even “sold himself to work wickedness,” saved both Him and his Family from the Judgments that awaited them: and it appears, in the latter, that the solemn humiliation and repentance even of a Devoted and Pagan City, could rescue it from the Vengeance, with which it was on the Point of being overwhelmed. These cases are both recorded in Scripture; and the cases there recorded are designed as Instructions and Examples for all succeeding ages.

What an Encouragement then do they afford to the duties of this Day! Especially, if it be also considered, that Cities and States are under such an Equal dispensation of Providence, that their Rewards or Punishments, in this world, always bear some due proportion to their respective prevailing Characters. As to Individuals indeed, the event, with regard to temporal prosperity, may be different: For
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there is another world for Their reception, where the proper rewards of Individuals are to be distributed; where, with respect to Them, all the inequalities of this will be fully adjusted; and where God "will render unto all according to their works:" But, as to Kingdoms and States, this world is the only stage of Their Existence. All earthly societies will, at the latest, be dissolved in the dissolution of the Earth; and if the Virtuous are not rewarded, and the Wicked are not punished, in this world, there will be an apparent failure in the administrations of Divine Providence.

This Doctrine is confirmed by the history of all ages, and all countries. There never was a virtuous and religious People that was not rewarded with prosperity and happiness; nor a wicked and corrupt State, that was not, sooner or later, made to undergo some exemplary punishment; and we may with confidence pronounce, that there never *will* be— unless Degeneracy on the one hand, or Reformation on the other, should interpose to prevent it.

The foregoing Considerations naturally lead us to reflect on the religious and moral state of This Kingdom in particular, and on the Title It can claim to the blessing of heaven, under its present difficulties.

On contemplating the Advantages we enjoy, and the Obligations we are under, it might be reasonably expected that our Improvements were eminent; and, as a *Nation*, that we were a pattern to the *World*, of every religious, moral, and political Accomplishment. We are enlightened by the full Splendor of the "Sun of Righteousness:" the beams of Revelation have dissipated the clouds that rested on our natural faculties: all the motives to right conduct, whether relating to this world or the next, are placed clearly in our view. Our Religion is that of the Gospel of Christ—"pure, "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy "and good fruits;" and its Efficacy is not obstructed by those Superstitious Impurities, which it had unhappily contracted in its passage through ages and regions of ignorance and darkness. For, by the *Reformation*, it has been restored to its original Perfection; and of Course has recovered its
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original Quality of being profitable—" for doctrine, for re-
" proof, for correction, and instruction in Righteousness."

Our *civil* Constitution, which is fair and beautiful in Theory, is admirably fitted for the Regulation of an orderly, if not for the Restraint of an unruly people. If it be wanting in Energy, the defect arises from principles that are friendly, I had almost said partial, to *Liberty*: And it must be granted, on all hands, that no subjects of any government are so free from arbitrary controul, or enjoy such constitutional Rights, as the subjects of Britain. At the same time, tho' we are apt to complain of the Weight of our Public Expenses,—yet it is, I believe, an undoubted Fact, that this Burden lies much heavier on the subjects of every neighbouring Kingdom and Republic,—and probably on those of every Independent State upon Earth, where Civilization and Refinement have made any considerable Advances.

We are also peculiarly happy in the Natural Advantages, and in the wonderful Improvements, of this " pleasant Land," of this " goodly heritage," which the Providence of God hath allotted to an hitherto-favoured people; through which great Numbers have been raised to Wealth and Affluence, and every prudent and Industrious person amongst us may acquire and enjoy a Comfortable Subsistence,—with a few exceptions of extraordinary cases, for which the Public is always willing to provide.

With these advantages, internal and external, religious and political, we ought to be the most thankful people upon Earth; the most virtuous, and the most happy. But what improvements, in *this* way, have we actually made? What have we " rendered unto the Lord, for all his" distinguishing " Benefits?"—Time was, when the Inhabitants of this Island had the Character of a sober, virtuous, and religious People: But that time, it is to be feared, is past. For, tho' Religion has not entirely departed,—and virtuous examples are to be found in every rank and order of men amongst us; yet he that hath eyes must see that such instances have become rare; so rare indeed, as to carry with them the appearance of Singularity. The want of Religious Principle, want of Seriousness,—gross Sensuality and endless Dissipation, with their natural train of evils,—too surely constitute the

the most striking Features, in a true portrait of the present age.

It was the Complaint some time ago, made by a very judicious Observer, * but with particular reference indeed to our great Metropolis (though in so short a course of years it is now become almost equally applicable to many inferior places) That " the Gospel of Christ—had been not only re-
 " jected, but treated with a malicious Scorn; and all our
 " hopes in Him represented as delusions and impositions on
 " the weakness of men:—that the Press for many years
 " past had swarmed with books, some to dispute, some to
 " ridicule, the great truths of Religion, both natural and re-
 " vealed:—that the Earnestness with which these books were
 " sought after, the Pleasure and Approbation with which
 " they were received, were too strong indications of the ge-
 " neral taste, to be dissembled: and the Industry, used to
 " disperse these books, both at home and abroad, and espe-
 " cially in our plantations in America, were proofs of such
 " Malice against the Gospel, and the holy Author of it, as
 " would not have been borne even in a Mahometan Coun-
 " try."

In Consequence of such pains taken to unsettle all religi-
 " ous Principles, he observes, That Idleness, and an unquench-
 " able thirst for Pleasure; that Lewdness and Debauchery,
 " Outrage and Violence, immediately ensued: " and that,
 " though Some have pretended to preserve a Sense of Vir-
 " tue without the Aid of Religion, yet Experience has shew-
 " ed, that people, who have neither hopes nor fears with
 " respect to another world, will soon abuse this, by indulg-
 " ing the worst of their passions; and will not regard Man,
 " when once they have learned to disregard God."

The above Portrait was drawn near thirty years ago: and
 if it was a just representation then, the Original, I fear, has
 not since improved. The great increase of our Wealth, with-
 in that period, hath certainly encreased the Means, and too
 probably the Inclination, to abuse it.

Now, such Luxury, Vice, and Irreligion, when generally
 predominant, have commonly proved the Forerunners of

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* Bp. Sherlock's Letter to the Inhabitants of London and Westminster,
 1730.

some public Calamity, and frequently of national Destruction. Wickedness, if left to itself, would work these effects: but we have seen that the Providence of God also interposes, to make these States and Kingdoms the Examples of Punishment, whose Principles and Morals are greatly and grossly corrupted.

Instruments of Chastisement can never be wanting to Him, who has all Nature at command; "whom the winds and "the seas obey;" who can stop the Sun in its course, and extinguish the lights of Heaven: but the Sword, the Pestilence, and Famine, are the Judgments, with which he most ordinarily punishes guilty Nations.

War, at the very best, even when successful, is a sore Visitation; a mark of God's anger, under which people ought to tremble, and "learn Righteousness:" but Civil War is one of the severest scourges of Heaven: it is the Sword of Divine Vengeance, which is two-edged, and wherever it strikes brings double ruin and accumulated destruction. When one part of the force of a nation is employed against the other, it must soon be destroyed, unless the progress of this exterminating evil can be speedily and effectually restrained: for "every Kingdom *thus* divided against itself, is "brought to Desolation," if the contest be suffered to continue.

As a Punishment for the sins of This Nation, for our Immoralities and Corruptions,—our ingratitude to Heaven, and our neglect of Religion (and perhaps partly for our neglecting to provide properly for the Support of it in our Provinces and Plantations,)—we are now reduced to this dangerous and critical situation. An Insurrection of the Members against the Head, has thrown the Body into Convulsions which are truly alarming. Or, in other words—Our most flourishing and populous Colonies, the glory and pride of this Nation, and which have been considered as no small Source of its Strength as well as Affluence, have, on pretences the most frivolous, and with insolence the most provoking, revolted against the Kingdom that produced and protected them. Those Children, whom we nourished and brought up, whom we have fostered in our bosoms, and even pampered with more than parental partiality, have *rebelled* against

against us!—Hear, O Heavens; and give ear, O Earth! If any thing can be still more unnatural and audacious, it is, that these degenerate Insurgents have had their Fomentors and Abettors in the very Heart of this Kingdom; who, forgetful, for a while, of Themselves and their Country, not only appeared publicly and exultingly in our Streets and in our Markets, but too many of them even in our Pulpits—in our Senate—in our most secret and most solemn Councils.

When such evils break out against a State, without any just reasons or gross provocations, they seem unquestionable marks of the indignation of Heaven, and can hardly be attributed to any other cause. It is difficult indeed to assign any reasons, that will Justify the Rebellion of Subjects against the Sovereign Authority. “Submision to the higher powers”^{*} is enjoined at least upon Christians, under the severest penalty. But, were Christianity altogether out of the question, yet the insurrection of subjects against their Rightful Governors, is condemned by those Laws which are fundamental to Society.

That which will go farthest in Excusing a Revolt, is the Tyranny of Rulers. But the Rebellion of our Colonies was planned, and fomented, by Its Leaders, without any Pretence of this nature. The Colonists were not in a state of Oppression; nor could they be made to *believe* that they were. Grievances indeed were pretended; and a List of them was publicly exhibited: But of these, some were evidently no grievances at all; and if any of them were really deemed to be so, they were much more than counterbalanced by peculiar Advantages. In short—Notwithstanding their Complaints, the Americans knew, and Most of them were willing to confess, “that they were the happiest of all people;”—seated in the bosom of peace and never-failing plenty,—enjoying the benefit of mild and equitable Laws,—secured by the Protection of This Kingdom against every Suspicion of danger from Foreign Invaders, and contributing far less than their Proportion towards defraying the general expences of Government.

How then (it will naturally be asked) could a people, thus happily situated, be persuaded to sacrifice these advantages, and to hazard their Fortunes, their Lives and their Souls, in such

^{*} *Vide* ROM. xiii.

such a Rebellion? To this Question a satisfactory answer may be expected, from one who resided in that country, during the time of the apparent rise, and gradual progress of this mischief, till it came to Maturity: And such an answer might indeed be *given* to the enquiry; but my time will not allow of that Detail, which is necessary to put the matter in its proper Light, and to exhibit the chief Characters in their genuine colours. I must therefore content myself with the following Observations, viz.—That Many of the Colonists were of Republican Principles, and had an hereditary disaffection to the English constitution: who wished for an opportunity, and endeavoured to create one, of becoming independent on the parent Kingdom:—

That these persons were persuaded to put themselves under the Direction both of ambitious and needy Adventurers; who by raising a Storm, were in hopes of advancing their own Interests;—the former, by getting command of the Vessel;—the latter, by bearing plunder from the wreck:—

That the Divisions in This Country, about the Rights of Election, and other subjects of Debate and Altercation; the Triumph of Opposition in some cases; the ill-timed lenity of Government, in yielding to popular Clamours, instanced in the Repeal of an Act which will long be remembered; together with the Assurances given to the Malecontents by their Correspondents *here*, of being able to afford them all proper support and necessary assistance;—were thought to be favourable Incidents, and encouraged the Leaders *there* to risque the Experiment:—

That, in order to engage the Americans in General to promote the design, its Conductors pretended, That a regular System was formed, “by a corrupt and abandoned Administration,” for oppressing and enslaving the colonies; of which every exercise of authority over them, however expedient, or *usual*, was alledged as a convincing Proof: that such Acts were Invasions of their Natural Rights—of their Chartered Privileges,—and even of that unalienable “Liberty wherewith Christ had made them free:” that every motive of Prudence, Policy, and Religion, required them to forego all Considerations of *present* ease and convenience, in a manful and timely Assertion of these Essential Rights, before the
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Chains that were forged should be rivetted upon them : and lastly, in order to lessen the Horrors of the proposed enterprise, they affirmed, and pretended to prove by accounts from hence, That but little Danger attended it ; as the Appearance of Firmness and Unanimity on Their part, would soon compell the Ministry to recede from their claims, and to comply with every demand of the Colonies, rather than contest the matter by force,—for which they were not and could not be provided.—And the people were not persuaded to “ take Arms,” without the strongest assurances that they would have no occasion to make Use of them.

When the great point of Arming was thus carried, every vile art was practised to inflame the minds of the Populace : Misrepresentation of Facts, false Intelligence, fictitious Letters from England, and even forged Acts of Parliament, all adapted to the occasions of the Day, were warmly and sedulously applied. The common people were frequently called from their Ploughs and their Workshops, to concert plans for securing the Liberties of their Country ;— by which they became sensible of their own Importance. By Them, under the direction of proper Leaders, Committees were chosen, Correspondencies settled, Associations and Solemn Leagues provided and imposed ; and, to *perfect* the “ good work,” Religion itself, or rather the Appearance of it, humbly ministered as an handmaid to Faction and Sedition. And it is well known, that solemn Prayers, Publick Fastings, and pathetic Sermons, were some of the most effectual means that were employed to invigorate the Rebellion. Add to This, and it is most worthy of Attention, That, as the plot advanced, the dangerous Consequences of any proposed measures were always concealed, or denied, till they actually happened : And the very Conduct, which the artful Conductors, in imitation of the Father of deceit and rebellion, represented as innocent and warrantable, in order to gain a Compliance,—after that was secured, they represented as absolutely unpardonable ; so that a retreat was rendered impossible ; and it was then become necessary to go forward, at every hazard and to the last extremity.

Such arts would almost “ deceive the Elect ;” and it is no wonder that they prevailed with the ignorant, the prejudiced,

dicted and unprincipled, to join with the crafty, the profligate and desperate, in executing the measures of their aspiring Demagogues.

The Remonstrances of his Majesty's well-affected and Loyal Subjects could avail but little: the voice of Reason, drowned in the din of licentious Tumult, was not to be heard: and they, whether Speakers, or Writers, or Printers, who endeavoured to withstand the Torrent, were treated with the greatest insolence, abuse, and insult;—to which permit Me to add, That Some of them were in the utmost danger of suffering the very last of human evils, by open violence, or more private Assassination. Nay, "they Have said, "come and let us root them out, that they be no more a "People, and that the Name of Israel may be no more in "Remembrance."

At length, "Every man to his Tents," was ostentatiously proclaimed; and war was levied against our most gracious Sovereign. From that time, all that was bad has been growing unspeakably worse, throughout all the parts of that once happy Country.

His Majesty and his Ministers *might* indeed, by a vigorous exertion of Power, have crushed this rebellion on its first Appearance: But They armed with reluctance; hoping that Extremities might still be avoided; and that those deluded Subjects would open their eyes to see "the things be-
"longing to their peace," and essential to their felicity. As the Fear of exorbitant Taxation, in Consequence of the Claims of Government, had been the principal Complaint on the side of the Colonies; in order to *quiet* this fear, and to restore harmony, if possible, an offer was made, under the sanction of Parliamentary Authority, to put the matter in debate on such a footing, as to secure the Americans against the abuse that was dreaded.

But the proposal was scornfully rejected, under the Pretence of its being *insidiously* made; and within a few days they commenced open Hostilities against the royal troops which had been sent thither—not to conquer a Rebellious country, but to support the Civil Magistrate in the due execution of his Office. From plundering the King's Stores, and seizing his Forts, that were not secured against such an unexpected

pected and audacious Intrusion, they proceeded to invade those of his adjacent dominions which were disposed to adhere to their duty. And the Success that for a while attended them, exceeded their own Expectations, and added much to their Insolence.

It then evidently appeared, that Nothing but the Sword could decide the contest : and it was time to think of providing for this melancholy, but necessary purpose. Accordingly, such a Force *was* sent over, as soon as the Season and other circumstances permitted. Yet after all, while the Sword was taken in one hand,—as no injuries or provocations could stifle in the parent kingdom, the natural suggestions of Tendernefs and Compassion in favour even of those forward, petulant, and rebellious Children,—the Olive-branch was extended in the other, still courting them to a peaceful accommodation of the unhappy difference. In what manner this Condescension and Goodness have been also slighted, as well as how brutally the best of Princes and of Men hath been debased and insulted, our late accounts have fully informed us. Alas ! Rebellion is like the deaf adder, and regards not the voice of the charmer : it is ever obstinate, and will listen to no entreaties.

From the foregoing Sketch it is evident, that Government has been compelled to have recourse to the Sword, after a fruitless trial of every milder method ; and we may safely appeal to heaven and earth for the Justice of This Cause. To Heaven indeed we actually make our appeal in the solemn Offices of This Day ; and we humbly implore its Blessing, in full confidence that our Motives are such as it approves.

If it be right in a Sovereign State, to attempt the forcible suppression of a wicked and unprovoked Rebellion, after all persuasive methods have failed ; then this War is just, on the part of Government. If it be right in a Kingdom, to attempt the recovery of its own dominions that have been wrested from it by the hand of lawless Usurpation ; then the war is just and necessary. If it be right in a Prince, to afford protection to his loyal and best subjects, against the
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Tyranny and Oppression of his worst and most disloyal; then the war is just, necessary, and laudable.

And here, though I have greatly trespassed upon your patience already, I must beg leave to observe, (and an observation it is, which I am satisfied will afford much pleasure to all those before whom I have the happiness to make it) That even in those revolted Colonies there are still thousands and Ten-thousands of his Majesty's Subjects, of inflexible Loyalty, who have been induced by no Menaces or Persecutions, to bow the knee to the Baal of Independency, or to swerve at all from the duties of Allegiance. In this number are included a large Proportion of the men of Property, the Greater Part of the Members of the Church of England, and, in Several of the colonies, all its Clergy, without Exception, to say nothing of Others. These, from the Beginning, have been the objects of Republican Rage, and fanatic Malignity. The common portion of all having been the most bitter and ignominious Invectives; to be treated as the off-scowering of the earth; to be insulted by the very Beasts of the people, and plundered of their Property, without any means of present Redress, though it is to be hoped, not without a prospect of Future Retribution.

Those who *distinguished* themselves in opposing the popular measures, met with proportionably severer treatment. Were this a proper time and place for the narrative, I could unfold such scenes of Persecution and Cruelty, as would excite the Indignation and Horror of every Soul in this Assembly. I could give a catalogue of persons, who for the above-mentioned Offence *only*, have been harassed by Committees, dragged about by the populace, and driven through the streets, with circumstances of Indignity too shocking to be related. I could tell of many, who, on account of their Loyalty, have been reduced from Affluence to Extreme Poverty: of many, who have been torn from their Families, and forced into Banishment, leaving their Wives and Children at the mercy of their Persecutors. Of others, who have been bound and fettered like the worst of Malefactors, and then consigned to endless Imprisonment; where they are, at this time, groaning under the utmost vexation and distress, and perhaps *perishing* for want of Necessaries: Of others,

others, who have been glad to seek refuge in the Wilderness, for many weeks together, without food and without shelter ; where they were still followed and hunted, like so many Beasts of Prey, by their inhuman Tormentors.

And lastly ; I could mention the Conflagration of a fair and flourishing City, unfortunately doomed to more than barbarian Fury, for its known Attachment to the Constitution of this Country " above its Fellows," (which the King's troops disdained to injure, and even took Pains to spare, though *then* in possession of the most ungenerous Enemy,) by a set of desperate Incendiaries — instigated, most probably, by still greater Incendiaries at a Distance — without any Prospect of Advantage to Themselves, and for the sole purpose, it should seem, of doing Injury to Others. In which dreadful calamity, had it not been for the Spirit and Humanity of the British Forces, not only the loss of immense Property, above what was actually destroyed, must inevitably have ensued ; but in Many instances, Old and Young would have perished together in one common devastation ; the Sick and Infirm have been consumed upon their " bed " of languishing, and the sucking infant have dropt breathless into the flames from the breast of its distracted mother. — But I would avoid raising any passions, which might interfere with the solemn Devotions of this Day, and therefore hasten my return to the point from which I have wandered.

One important object of this war, as hath been intimated, and which proves it to be a *just* one, is to protect those Loyalists who have been thus persecuted for adhering to their allegiance ; and to restore them to their legal rights, and till now undoubted possessions. For these purposes the sword is unsheathed, and the battle set in array : It is with a View that such *monstrous* " Wickedness of the wicked may come " to an end," (to use the language of my Text) and that the " Just may be established ;" or, in the words of the Royal Proclamation, That the King's " loyal subjects within his " Colonies and Provinces in North America, may be delivered from the violence, injustice, and tyranny of those " daring Rebels, who have assumed to themselves the exercise of arbitrary power." Never was there a more worthy object

object of military Exertion ; never was the power of any Nation better employed !

Having made the necessary Preparations for this important and unavoidable Contest, we are now to put our trust in Almighty God for Success ; and to implore his Blessing on our Fleets and Armies : to humble ourselves before him, under a sense of our Sins ; and to form sincere Resolutions of becoming more worthy of the Blessings we implore. If throughout the Nation there is a due Compliance with this pious call of our Sovereign, we have great Reason to hope that our prayers will be regarded ; that all those heavy Judgements, which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved, will be averted ; and that God will restore to us the " Blessing of Peace" in every part of this extensive empire. The many important advantages already gained, by the bravery of our troops, under the skilful conduct of their respective Commanders, may then be considered as so many Earnests of greater favours, and as introductory to the complete and speedy re-establishment of order, harmony, and good government, in a miserably distracted Country.

On the whole—It is of the utmost consequence to us, that our present Fasting be not like that of " the Hypocrites," but that it be performed in " simplicity and godly sincerity ;" that we " fast not to be seen of men," much less " for strife " and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness ;"—but in order to " put away the evil of our doings, that *so* " Iniquity may not be our ruin." If on this occasion we truly " turn unto the Lord our God," we shall find that " he is " gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great Kindness." For such is his goodness, that in consequence of the Repentance and Reformation of sinful Nations, " he repenteth him of the evil" with which he may have threatened them. " Be merciful (therefore) unto us, O God, " be merciful unto us, for our soul trusteth in Thee ; and " under the shadow of thy wings shall be our Refuge, until " this Tyranny be overpast !"

And, for the future, let us be particularly guarded against those licentious Principles of the Times, which in their natural Tendency are subversive of Government ; which have more immediately contributed to bring on the calamity we
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now deplore ; and which, more than once, have brought this Nation to the very Brink of Destruction.

When mens Principles are wrong, their Practices will seldom be right. When they suppose those Powers to be derived solely from the People, which are "ordained of God," and their heads are filled with ideas of Original Compacts which never existed, and which are always explained so as to answer their present Occasions ; no wonder that they confound the duties of Rulers and Subjects, and are perpetually prompted to dictate, where it is their business to obey. When once they conceive the Governed to be superior to the Governors, and that they may set up their pretended Natural Rights in Opposition to the positive Laws of the State ; they will naturally proceed to "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities," and to open a door for Anarchy, "Confusion, and every evil work," to enter.

Such wild, visionary, enthusiastic Notions, with regard to Society, have always been counteracted and opposed by the example and instructions of this University ; which may without vanity boast, that amid the greatest revolutions of human affairs, and fluctuation of opinions, it hath been steadier in its Principles, and suffered more for its Consistency in the support of Regal Government, than perhaps any other place of the like nature, in the Christian World. And whilst its supreme literary rank commands the highest respect from all lovers of Science ; the Soundness of its religious and political Principles, must secure the esteem of the wise and worthy, and entitle it to the patronage of the great and virtuous.

To conclude : If we wish for national prosperity and happiness, it concerns us in the first place to "fear God," that we may obtain the protection and blessing of his good Providence ; and then, by a natural progression, we shall "honour the King," by obeying, and endeavouring to support, his Lawful Authority. The Health of a State requires a regular and due subordination of its Members to the governing power ; and its Strength arises from their performing each of them the proper functions assigned them in the political Body, without obstructing one another in their respective Offices.

Let every man then be contented with his Station, and faithfully discharge its attendant duties. Let every private
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view be abandoned, as soon as it is found to interfere with the Interest and Honour of the Public. And let it be the earnest endeavour of One and All, to promote internal Peace, Harmony, and *Unanimity*, which are things essentially requisite to public prosperity and national happiness. Were it not for our Divisions at home, our Colonies abroad would never have *Dared* to insult us: and were the Subjects of this kingdom *Happily United*, and ready to exert themselves in one proper line of direction for the Common Defence; it would, under Providence, be invincible; and no Combination of Foreign Powers could make us daunted or dismayed.

May that Almighty and All-gracious Being, in whose hands are all the Nations of the Earth, and from whom all good Councils and all just Works (as well public as private) do proceed, make us "perfect" as a Nation, "stablish, strengthen, Settle us?" May we All, in our respective stations, be excited and enabled to correct what is amiss, and to "hold fast that which is good!" May we learn to "be of one Mind, and live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace shall be with us!" To Him be ascribed all Glory and Dominion, Adoration and Praise, for ever and ever, Amen.

F I N I S.